

Co-Chairs Hartley and Dargan,
Members of the Committee,

My name is Ethan Rodriguez-Torrent. I grew up in Southbury, and I currently live in New Haven.

{First of all, thank you for giving all of us here the opportunity to provide input on the bills before your committee. As you know, the Bipartisan Task Force remains mired in debate despite overwhelming public support for assertive gun reform, so your committee's action on this issue has become more important than ever.}

I was present, and two of my friends were wounded, at the Aurora theater shooting last summer. I have also lived for four years in New Haven, a city where the homicide rate in 2011 was double that of Chicago. So gun violence is a very personal issue to me and my community.

So I want to start by thanking you for proposing some common-sense regulations on deadly weapons. S. B. 1076 in particular is a brave bill, and I applaud this committee for raising it. I'm convinced that, if passed, 1076 and the other bills on the table today will help to keep the deadliest guns off our streets, reduce illegal gun sales, and give law enforcement more of the tools they need to identify gun traffickers.

I have read the full text of each bill before the committee today, and I want to make a few comments:

However, I think it's my responsibility to bring up a few important areas where these bills fall short.

1. First, in S.B. 6162, mental health lookbacks during background checks should be extended to 5 years, not just 2.
2. Second, to S.B. 897: It's a good start. But why are the penalties you've proposed not as strict as the ones we have in place for DUI offenses, which include a mandatory minimum 2-day jail sentence and license suspension? And while we're on this bill, why is permitting only required limited for the sale of *fifty* or more firearms? The limit should be no more than *six* for any individual who is not a federally licensed firearms dealer with a fixed place of business.
3. Third, none of these bills incentivizes safe storage. The Committee needs to do so by stipulating strict liability for anyone who does not report their gun lost or stolen within 72 hours. It should also incentivize the use of gun safes – not just trigger locks, which can be cut – by appropriating funding for PSAs and advertisements, similar to the “click it or ticket” and anti-DUI campaigns, to encourage a culture of safe storage in our state. Based on what we know so far, safer storage *could* have prevented the Sandy Hook massacre and should not be ignored.

4. Fourth, finally, and most important, the Committee *must* limit bulk purchases for handguns, not just rifles. We know that handguns account for over 80% of gun deaths, that concealable handguns are the weapon of choice for criminals, and that two-thirds of Connecticut's traced crime guns originate in-state; we also know that many illegal handguns start with bulk purchases by a few permitted individuals with clean criminal records who then turn around and sell them on the street. So why isn't the Committee considering stopping handgun trafficking at the source by prohibiting bulk purchases? S.B. 1076 limits purchases to 30 per month the sale of rifles, but not for handguns. That's a slap in the face of anyone who's been victimized in our urban areas – it's like saying that we as a state only care about Newtown, not about the weekly gun deaths in Hartford and Bridgeport and New Haven.
 - a. To accomplish this, the phrase "other than a pistol or revolver" should be removed from Lines 424 and 428-429, or a new section should be added limiting the purchase of pistols and revolvers to one per thirty-day period.

In closing: Please pass comprehensive gun reform without delay. You've probably seen the UConn and Quinnipiac polls, so I'm sure it's clear by now that *you have the support of your constituents in doing this*. Thank you for your time and your effort on this issue.